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KING ALBERT FUND

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THE RUINS OF YPRES

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KING ALBERT FUND

Belgium — King Albert fund
III X



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM.

King Albert Fund



HOMES FOR THE
HOMELESS BELGIANS.

Principal Office : 1, Rue Jules-Lefebvre, Paris.



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KING ALBERT FUND.

ADMINISTRATION.

A. — COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT.

Chairman :

The Minister of the Interior.

Vice Chairman :

Mr. Cooreman, Minister of State, Director of the
“Société Générale” of Belgium.

Mr. Ernest P. BICKNELL

Member: Director of American Red Cross Branch for Belgium

Mr. Charles Dejongh, former Chairman of the
Order of Advocates to the Court of Appeal,
Brussels, Chief of Cabinet of the Minister
of the Commissariat of the Belgian Army.

Baron Gillès de Pelichy, Member of the House of
Representatives.

Baron C. Goffinet, Envoy Extraordinary and
Minister Plenipotentiary of H. M. the King
of the Belgians.

M. Lambiotte, Senator.

Lieutenant General Mols.

Baron van Eetvelde, Minister of State.

Delegated Administrator-Secretary :

Lt. General Mols.

Delegated as Financial controller :

Baron C. Goffinet.

Secretary :

Mr. Marcel de Vigneron.

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B. — EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS.

Managing Director

Mr. Zanen, Chief Engineer, Director of Public Works.

Secretary

Mr. Raymond Moenaert, Architect S. C. A. B.
Town-Planner.

Treasurer:

Mr. Victor van Landeghem.





KING ALBERT FUND

I.

NOTICE.

On August 4, 1914, Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium, — that neutrality which she herself had guaranteed by most solemn treaties. At the very moment the Armies of Germany were crossing the Belgian frontier, King Albert was making a memorable speech to Parliament at Brussels, which he ended with the following words :

« I have faith in our destiny; a country which defends itself commands the respect of all; such a country cannot perish!

Invaded, devastated, bleeding, Belgium defended herself heroically. She struggled — she is still struggling — not only for her own independence, but for the honour and liberty of the world. And it is because she understood from the very beginning the

nature of the conflict, and because she sacrificed herself for the cause of civilization, that Belgium "commands the respect of all".

Belgium has not perished, and she shall not perish!

Though to-day she is only the "fragment of the Homeland" which Verhaeren glorifies :

Ce n'est qu'un bout de sol étroit,
Mais qui renferme encore et sa reine et son roi
Et l'amour condensé d'un peuple qui les aime. (1)

yet the day draws near when she will arise, whole, greater because of her sacrifice and by her sufferings.

But before she can return to her former prosperity, the towns and villages destroyed by her barbarous invader must arise from their ashes, and, first of all, a shelter must be provided for those who fled before the destruction and burning of their homes.

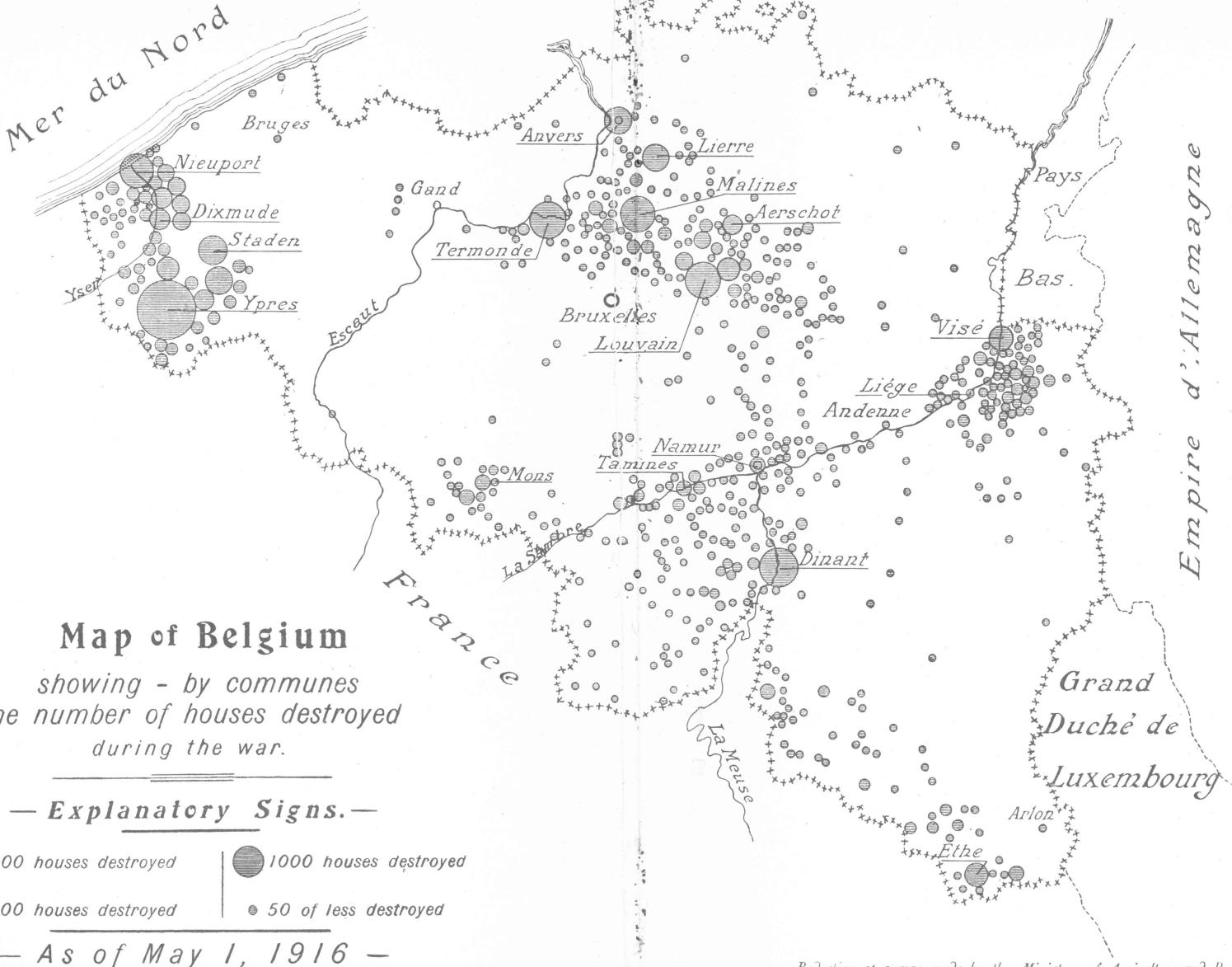
The organization which was created to provide these emergency shelters was naturally placed under the patronage of him, who on the day of the invasion, declared that

(1) Tis but a narrow strip of soil,
Yet still it holds its King and Queen
And their people's pent-up love

Mer du Nord

Pays-Bas

Empire d'Allemagne



Reduction of a map made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Public Works,
(Municipal High Way Commission).



Belgium should not perish ; it is *King Albert Fund*.

More than 400.000 Belgians are still living in England, France, Holland and Switzerland, those hospitable countries to which they fled in 1914, but all, no matter with what friendliness they were received, are awaiting with feverish impatience the hour of their return to their native land. For exile is bitter, even to the least unfortunate among them. They long for all that they have left behind — their loved ones, their country, the homes in which they lived and where they tasted the joys and the sorrows of domestic life.

What despair and discouragement would be theirs if, — their anxious waiting over — they reached the Promised Land, their country, only to find ruin and desolation, there where their homes once stood.

Up to May 1916, about 43.000 houses had been burned or destroyed in Belgium. This wholesale destruction from which more than 600 cities towns and villages suffered, detailed by provinces is as follows : Brabant, 5.833 houses destroyed; Antwerp, 3.553; Liége, 3.444; Namur, 5.243; Hai-

naut, about 3.500; Luxembourg, about 3.000; Limbourg, about 125; East Flanders, about 2.500; and West Flanders, about 16.000.

Without dwellings, the workers would be condemned to forced idleness; family life would be impossible, and those who, after long absence, should be reunited under the same roof, would find themselves separated, and wanderers in their own land!

Such a disaster must at all costs be avoided, and it is with this object in view that the Belgian Government inaugurated *King Albert Fund*.

It is possible even now to prepare dwelling houses — if only temporary structures — to shelter the exiles on their return, and to install them very rapidly to keep pace with the liberation of the country; whole villages, with Town Hall, Church and Schools, will restore them to civil and religious life without any depressing period of waiting, just as the house will give them back the “home” and their former habits of life.

In this way, everyone will immediately be able to return to his labors so tragically

interrupted and graves dangers, both from a moral and economic point of view, and considerable loss of time and energy will be avoided.



Without doubt, this is a charge that devolves upon Belgium, but how can she meet it if assistance is not forthcoming? The State finances are exhausted, as also are those of the majority of Belgians. The State will be compelled to have recourse to a loan to permit of its paying to *King Albert Fund* the amounts which it has promised and which will be entirely inadequate to meet so great a disaster.

It is for this reason that the Fund makes a new appeal to the generosity of all those, who, touched by her undeserved fate, are anxious to help in the reconstruction of Belgium and to aid her to resume her former activity.

They, and all who have helped her in her hour of need, will have her lasting gratitude.



II

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL PROCEDURE.

CREATION OF THE FUND

King Albert Fund is a public organization, created by a Decree dated September 23, 1916. The Statutes of the Organization bear the same date. (*Moniteur Belge* of 23-30 September 1916, 523rd and following pages.)



Article I of the Decree reads as follows :

« A public Organization entitled *King Albert Fund* has been created with a view to meet, so far as circumstances permit, the most pressing needs for dwelling houses in those parts of Belgium devastated by the war. »



The *Fund* is under the constant supervision of the Belgian Government. It enjoys however full civil rights including the acquiring and owning of personal and landed property and the receiving of gifts and bequests. It operates with capital received from the Belgian State, and with donations and bequests made to it.

* * *

In accordance with the Statutes, *King Albert Fund* is administered by a Board of Directors and an Executive Committee. The Home Secretary is President of the Board, the Vice Chairman and members being nominated by the King.

The principal duty of the Board is to see that the *Fund* is in a position to satisfy the requirements of those who are momentarily homeless, in so far as dwelling houses and the fitting-up the roof is concerned.

The Executive Committee is composed of a General Manager, nominated by the King, — a Secretary and a Treasurer nominated by the Home Secretary.

All acts of the Treasurer are approved by a member of the Board of Directors.

At the end of each month a detailed report of operations is addressed to the Home Secretary. A yearly report on the working and finances of the Fund is published in the *Moniteur Belge*.





KINGDOM OF BELGIUM.

KING ALBERT FUND

HOMES FOR THE
HOMELESS BELGIANS.

Subscription Form.

I, the undersigned

living at

subscribe the sum of

to King Albert Fund.

SIGNATURE :

Kindly return the above form duly filled in to
Fonds du Roi Albert, rue Jules-Lefebvre 1, Paris.

Donations may also be addressed to the **Belgian Ministers**, Belgian Legation, London and Washington.

As a mark of gratitude, the names of donors of not less than frs. 1.000, will be inserted in the Golden Book of War Works, established by the Belgian Government, by Royal Decree of December 22, 1915. The names of donors of not less than frs. 5.000, will in addition be inscribed on commemorative tablets to be placed on the walls of the Town Halls of Ypres, Dinant and Louvain.

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